



## **KINARD LITTLETON –**

Richard Kinard Littleton was likely Clinton High School's greatest all-around athlete. Arguments arise over whether he was the finest football player, or even the finest running back, but he certainly has his supporters. As a baseball player, Littleton stands alone among Red Devil alums.

Littleton never made it to the big leagues. Being drafted into the Army in 1964 may have cost him that shot.

“When I got out, I was trying hard to get back in shape for baseball, and I hurt my arm, and that was back before they had Tommy John surgery,” he said. “Still, my last year (at Triple-A Tucson in 1967) was a really good year.”

Littleton played eight years in the minors -- three years in A ball, three years in Double-A and two in Triple-A -- in places like Selma, Alabama; Sarasota, Florida; Tidewater (Norfolk), Virginia; Evansville, Indiana; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Tucson, Arizona. In the minors, Littleton batted a cumulative .266, hitting 40 home runs and driving in 249 runs.

In Selma, Littleton formed a friendship with Lou Piniella that has lasted through the years.

“Lou was our left fielder, and then we both had to go into the Army the next year, and he and I were in basic training together,” he recalled. “(Ex-USC coach) June Raines (from Whitmire) was our catcher.”

After signing with the Cleveland Indians out of high school, Littleton was dealt to the Chicago White Sox, playing seven years in that organization. His best season was 1965, when he hit 10 home runs and 18 doubles and drove in 72. He played second base, third and shortstop.

In football, Littleton was all-state and All-South and played in the Shrine Bowl. He was a stand-out in track and basketball and led Clinton teams to state baseball championships in 1960 and 1961. Clinton won the state title over North Augusta and lost the football title to the same school, coached by Cally Gault. The star of North Augusta was future Dallas Cowboy Craig Baynham.

“They invite me to their reunions,” Littleton said. “Cally told me, ‘Well, you never touched the end zone against us,’ and I said, ‘You know what? In baseball, y’all never touched the plate.’ He got a big kick out of me saying that.”